

North York Moors National Park Authority

Ryedale District Parish: Thornton le Dale	App Num. NYM/2011/0469/FL
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Proposal: Demolition of existing section of wall together with the construction of new boundary wall, restoration of existing wall, replacement steel railings and gateposts and re-surfacing of drive with gravel

Location: Beck Hall, Priestman's Lane, Thornton Dale

Applicant: Mr Charles Webb, Beck Hall, Priestman's Lane, Thornton Dale, North Yorkshire, YO18 7RT

Date for Decision: 10 October 2011

Grid Ref: SE 483754 483205

Director of Planning's Recommendation

Refusal for the following reason:

1. The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposed demolition of the section of wall adjacent the driveway of Beck Hall would result in an unacceptable loss of historic fabric which would be out of keeping and to the detriment of the character of the Conservation Area and setting of this Listed Building. The proposed replacement wall is considered to be overly fussy for this site and locality which is characterised by modest and simple forms of boundary treatments. The proposal would not preserve or enhance the character of the site or area and is therefore considered contrary to Core Policy G and Development Policies 4 and 5 of the NYM Local Development Framework together with the guidance of Planning Policy Statement 5.

Consultations

Parish - Request further information.

Highways - No objection.

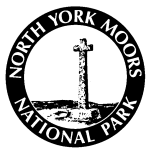
Advertisement Expiry Date - 14 September 2011.

Background

Beck Hall is a substantial Grade II listed property which fronts onto Priestman's Lane within Thornton Dale Conservation Area. The property is constructed from sandstone under a pantile roof with a very large characteristic bow window on the front elevation overlooking the beck. To the left of the main hall is a later extension which, in the past, has been in separate ownership but following an application in 2009, is now used as part of the living accommodation of Beck Hall. There is a lawned area to the front of the property which is enclosed by a low brick wall with stone copings and simple historic railings.




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Scale: 1:1250 



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Background (continued)

Vehicular access to the property is via a single width driveway to the left. Adjacent to the driveway and attached to the former Beck Hall Cottage is a large sandstone wall with elegantly shaped bow top and the lawn to the front of the property also extends in front of this wall. The wall is 2.7 metres high at its highest, reducing to 1.7 metres (2 metres to the top of the coping) and is 2.5 metres wide. It is a notable feature in the street scene.

Members may recall that Listed Building consent was granted in 2010 for various alterations to rear of the property to improve access between the house and garden together with improving the appearance of the rear elevation. The works included the partial demolition of an outbuilding, terracing of the garden, insertion of rooflights, alterations to door and window openings and internal alterations to bring the former cottage into use as part of the main dwellinghouse. The original application was amended significantly by the applicant following Officer requests and the proposed removal of the wall adjacent to the driveway was omitted from the scheme to allow further negotiations to take place between Officers and the applicant.

The works approved are nearing completion and this application revisits the issue of the wall adjacent the driveway. This application seeks Listed Building consent for the removal of the wall, rebuilding of a low boundary wall, repair/replacement of the railings and alterations to the access to allow improved vehicular access. Officers have requested amendments to the scheme, again to omit the demolition of the historic wall and revise the proposals for the boundary wall. The applicant has indicated reluctance but that they have not yet decided how they intend to proceed with the application and as no amendments have been received to date this recommendation is brought to Members based on the original plans. In the event the applicant amends the proposals in line with Officer advice, a revised recommendation will be considered.

The applicant has written in to clarify that unless a full and convincing written justification to resist the demolition of the wall is forwarded to him, he wishes to remove the wall and have the application determined for its demolition. If the justification convinces him of the merits then he will accept the compromise solution suggested by Officers.

Main Issues

The main issues to consider are whether the proposed alterations would have a detrimental impact upon the quality, character and appearance of the Listed Building and whether the proposals would conserve or enhance the building's setting or appearance of the wider Conservation Area.

Policy Context

The relevant policies of the Local Development Framework are Core Policy G (Landscape, Design and Historic Assets), Development Policy 4 (Conservation Areas) and Development Policy 5 (Listed Buildings).

Core Policy G of the Core Strategy and Development Policies seeks to ensure that the landscape, historic assets and cultural heritage of the National Park are conserved and enhanced, with particular protection being given to those elements which contribute to the character and setting of Conservation Areas.

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Policy Context (continued)

Development Policy 4 of the Core Strategy and Development Policies seeks to ensure that development within or immediately adjacent to a Conservation Area either preserves or enhances the character and appearance or setting of the area.

Development Policy 5 of the Core Strategy and Development Policies Development only permits extensions or changes of use of a Listed Building, or the construction of any structure within its curtilage where such development will not have an unacceptable impact on the special historic or architectural interest, or the setting of the Listed Building.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5

The policy guidance contained within PPS5 is concerned with planning and the historic environment. Listed Buildings are identified as heritage assets which the guidance states should be conserved as they are a non-renewable resource. In considering applications Local Planning Authorities should have a presumption in favour of the conservation of the heritage asset. Substantial harm to or loss of Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings should be wholly exceptional. Policy HE 7.5 states that Local Planning Authorities should take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and consideration of any design should include the materials to be used.

Conservation Area and Access and Parking

The main concern in terms of impact on the Conservation Area was the proposal to remove the wall adjacent to the driveway. The Authority considers that the wall is attractive and has intrinsic quality, despite showing signs of age and wear. The wall enhances the setting of the building and contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, in part, by obscuring the visual impact of the driveway and is considered an unusual and important feature of this part of Thornton Dale Conservation Area.

The applicant has explained that the property has grown and has been altered significantly through its 250 year history and whilst it is accepted that the Authority is of the opinion that the wall is 'interesting'. The applicant believes that the wall would not be considered significant historically, technically or architecturally. The applicant has also suggested that this application proposes an alternative and similarly designed wall which compensates for the loss of the original. This application seeks to improve parking provision at the property. The property is unquestionably large and the applicant has confirmed that there are three generations living there with significant vehicle use. Parking on the road outside the property is restricted for most of the year and the proposal to remove the wall and part of the lawn would allow greater manoeuvrability of cars on the driveway and allow the double garage to be brought back into use. If approved, the proposed works would mean that fewer cars will be visible on the drive and road, whilst the driveway would be obscured by the new wall arrangement and overall, enhance the impact of activities at the property on the wider Conservation Area.

There have been lengthy pre-application discussions between Officers and the applicant in order to find an acceptable solution to the issue of car parking at Beck Hall and the scheme currently proposed was discussed and considered to have some merit. However, after assessment of accurately drawn plans and details, Officers are of the opinion that the removal of the wall would result in an adverse impact on both the character of the Conservation Area, setting of the Listed Building and result in a loss of historic fabric which is generally resisted.

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Conservation Area and Access and Parking (continued)

Whilst it is noted that the applicants have sought to mimic the style of the original wall and have maintained the constricted access to the drive (as recommended by Officers in view of the fact driveways along Priestman's Lane are predominantly single width), the current plans are considered to result in an awkward and detailed arrangement. Officers have requested amendments to the scheme and asked that the wall proposed for demolition to be retained as it is considered to be of significant value to the site and wider Conservation Area and to compensate for the restrictions this places on the driveway, have suggested that the grass in front of the wall to be reduced to the end of the extension so the driveway is double width. Furthermore, Officer's have requested that the heavy stone pillars and shoulders proposed to flank the pedestrian gate are replaced by very simple and modest stone posts as traditionally matching iron gate posts are used in this area.

Design and Materials

The proposed design of the new stretch of dwarf wall is considered to be overly fussy for this site which is currently characterised by a very simple and modest boundary treatment which does not detract from either the host property or wider Conservation Area. The proposal to include substantial stone gate posts and shoulders to flank the pedestrian gate is considered to create an overly formal entrance to the property which has always enjoyed an understated and relatively open frontage.

The materials are considered to be appropriate and consistent with the host property and providing the original design of the railings is maintained, the Authority would have no objection to their replacement where the original railings were beyond repair.

The Parish Council have not provided comment of the application on grounds that there is insufficient information for them to make a decision. There has been no indication from the Parish Council with regard to the details required to help them in their decision making and as such, their comments are still awaited.

Recommendation

In view of the above, the Authority is of the opinion that the proposed demolition of the section of wall adjacent the driveway of Beck Hall would result in an unacceptable loss of historic fabric which would be of detriment to the character of the Conservation Area and setting of this Listed Building and the proposed replacement wall is overly complicated for this site characterised by the modest and simple form of the existing boundary treatment. The proposal would not preserve or enhance the character of the site or area and is therefore considered contrary to policy and refusal is recommended.